10: d'Orleans--296 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 632, 643

"In this district, the king had perhaps formerly less authority ; the villages were subject to him by the ties of vassaldom, and, being impelled by a community of interests, formed a federation round the town as a common centre; and Luang Prabang provided a body of militia but did not find any forced labour."

10: d'Orleans--299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 595, 643

"The native Government acts under the control of the Commissioner. [LSS: the Siamese Commissioner] At the head of it are two kings, one for peace and the other for war, who reign in concert. The royalty is hereditary, and, owing to the existence of polygamy, the royal family is a numerous one and is related to all the families in the city. The two reigning kings (1) bear the names of Chao Kham Souck and Chao Boune Khong (now called by the Siamese Chao Ratchapha Khinaï). Their father Chao Boune Kham, after a reign of twenty years, abdicated, and he has now become, at the age of eighty-two, a sacred personage and more or less of a demi-god."

1. According to Hallett (p. 32), the kings of Luang Prabang, like those of Lahon, Lapoon, Peh, and Tern, have only the title of Chao Huang (great prince), while those of Xieng Maï and Nau are Chou Che Wit (lord of life). The former are only entitled to kill criminals by piercing their breasts with a lance, while the latter are said to have the right to behead them.

10: d'Orleans--337-338 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 516, 643

"Upon a sign from the king, tea and cigarettes are brought us, and the servants fan us. The other servants, who are dressed like the common people, remain in a crouching attitude, and if they move about the room do so on their hands and knees. It is humiliating to see men dragging themselves about like animals; but we do not witness the sight long as our visit is a brief one, and it is not until some time after this that we see the father, a fine old man of eighty-two, whose white hair is cropped close, and whose face is very intelligent, though owing to the loss of his teeth the chin is rather elevated.

His position as a semi-divinity enables him to speak his mind very freely, and he takes great interest in our journey, giving us some advice as to [338] our descent of the Mekong. He seems very grateful to M. Pavie, who once saved his life, and he makes even more favourable an impression upon us than his son, though both seem well disposed towards the Europeans--if they were free to act. But Siam plays the same part towards them that China does to Thibet, and one would hope that the era of liberty is at hand which, in delivering the two countries from the yoke which oppresses them, will open a valuable field of study to our science and fresh outlets to our commerce."

10: d'Orleans--370 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 353, 643, 177.35

"We gather information as to the route which we are to follow from the second King of Luang Prabang, who has just returned that way from Bangkok. He lives near us in an enormous room, which his baggage has transformed into a veritable bric-à-brac shop. There are glass-globes, imitation paper flowers under glass, European hats, cooking utensils, and cruets, indeed, a little of everything which has attracted the prince in the way of European civilisation. After living twenty-two months at Bangkok, he is returning to Luang Prabang slowly by easy stages. Elegantly turned out, he seems franker than his brother, and after exchanging visits he sends us a present of cocoanuts and bananas."

"Royal servants went to announce us, though word of our coming had been sent ahead, and while we waited I mentally reviewed the information I had gleaned from the Oriental Almanach de Gotha it had been my privilege to consult at French headquarters on the eve of my royal reception. I make no claim as to its exactness, and still less to that of my memory; but there is a probability that both of them are approximately correct. Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah, present king of Luang Prabang and a direct descendant of an endless line of its kings, was born in 1885, on July 14--no wonder he is a favorite of the French--and succeeded his father Zacharine in 1904. His mother was not his mother, so to speak. For Tiao Thong [305] Di, first wife of Zacharine, still known as the Queen Mother, and real ruler of the royal household, bossing even the king himself in domestic matters, according to reliable verbal information from a French and feminine source, had no male children. The second-rank wife, Tiao Thong Si, daughter of a high mandarin related to the royal family, gave birth to the present monarch; but in Laos as in China every child is officially the offspring of the first wife. His father Zacharine seems to have been a temperate person, considering his advantages, for the king has only three half-brothers and six half-sisters; though it is possible that Zacharine died with certain secrets buried in his bosom, Occidental

fashion. Half-sisters and half-brothers may marry in Luang Prabang, by the way, which is not without its effect on the reigning house. Also Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah has at least this much in common with his English colleague, that he had an older brother who died, leaving him unexpectedly heir to the throne.

The latest calculations were that the present king had fifteen wives and about forty children; on this second point he did not seem to be very exact himself, no doubt finding it difficult to keep strictly up to date in domestic events within his household. Yet he did not look either worn or dissipated, when presently he came in to shake hands and sit down with us, perhaps because the Queen Mother takes so many of the palace cares off his shoulders. Seven of his sons were studying at the Lycée in Hanoï, and the crown prince, Savang Vathama, then sixteen, was nearing his bachelor degree in a similar institution at Montpellier in France, with the avowed intention of studying law afterward. The king himself had a purely Laosian education under Buddhist priests until King Zacharine sent him to a French collège at Saïgon. Later he went to the Ecole [306] Coloniale in the Rue de l'Observatoire in Paris, where French youths prepare for a career in the colonies. He came home once when his father was ill, but upon his recovery was sent back to France to get together a printing establishment with Laosian characters and to learn how to run it, which makes him more or less related to the late kaiser, bookbinder.

The king was plump and pleasant, handsome for his race, by no means betraying his all but forty years. It was easy to imagine the girls of Luang Prabang, if not indeed of France, 'just crazy' about him, quite aside from his royal rank. He had a frail Oriental mustache and that beautiful bronze-brown complexion of his race. Unlike most European monarchs he is purely of the blood of those he reigns over. But his Majesty indulges in the chief minor vice of his people, and the only blot on his manly beauty, and not even that of course to the fair ones of his own land, was that his teeth, though they were not enameled, were discolored and his lips somewhat bloody with betel-juice. Even now he seemed to be nursing a quid, though with a regal finesse that it would have done our secret chewers of tobacco good to see."

23: Franck--306-308 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-3
116, 291, 643

"He [EJ: the king] wore a white cork helmet, a black bow-tie about a standing white collar on a stiff white shirt with the round cuffs of a decade or more ago, and a snow-white three button coat which, in so far as my meager knowledge in sartorial matters is trustworthy, was of the latest model. The fact that the middle buttonhole was attached to the upper button may have meant either a dreadful ignorance of Western ways or merely unseemly haste in leaving his harem; or it may have had no significance whatever. His feet were quite properly incased in low black shoes of faultless last and luster, but--let the spinster reader blushingly turn the page [307] here--he wore no trousers! His rank and calling, it seems, forbade him these final touches to an otherwise perfectly European costume. Instead, his thighs were inclosed in the pha or sampot, such as is worn by both sexes in Siam and adjoining countries under Siamese influence. It was a kind of short skirt, evidently of silk and of colors verging on the gaudy, drawn between the legs and tucked into the belt at the back, reaching to just below the knees in front and 'rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind.' Naturally a full-fledged king could not leave the hiatus uncovered and keep his self-respect. Therefore between sampot and shoes the royal legs were clad in silk stockings of which the most regal young lady of our own land might have been proud--except that in her case they would no doubt have been of a color to deceive the uninformed observer into thinking she wore no stockings whatever, whereas in backward barbarian Luang Prabang this would have

been bad form. These were jet-black and reached so far up the back as to suggest that they were held by a band about the waist. Indeed, it was immediately evident that the king had missed a splendid chance for extra decoration by not wearing a pair of red garters just below the knees.

A goodly proportion of the royal income must be spent on stockings. For I was assured, not merely by common rumor but by all the Frenchwomen in Luang Prabang--of whom there are three or four--that his Majesty will under no circumstances wear anything but silk about his shapely legs, and that a stocking with the slightest hole in it is immediately discarded. It would be easy to imagine his wives, of whom he fortunately has fifteen, scrambling for these discards of the royal wardrobe, and racing for their darning needles, were it not that in Laos even the wives of kings do not wear stockings. [308]

But do not for a moment gather from all this that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah had the slightest hint of the barbarian in his appearance. Except for the sacred sampot in place of trousers, and the proof of a king's income between that and the shoes, his Majesty would have attracted no attention whatever in a Palm Beach crowd, unless it were by his athletic build and his agreeable undissipated smile, and, at close range, the light touch as of fresh blood on his lips beneath the thin well clipped moustache. In fact of all the kings with whom I have hobnobbed he was the most pleasing to look

upon, and to all outward appearances a gentleman not even given to bullying his wives. His lapel was adorned with the little red button of a French decoration--the Legion of Honor, I fancy, though I confess to a deplorable ignorance of these important matters--and a gold watch-chain hanging from this drew attention to what was evidently not the thinnest of watches in the outside breast-pocket. A signet-ring not unlike those of our West Point and Annapolis graduates encircled his wedding finger, and he wore a cord of what looked like ordinary string about each wrist."

"The king spoke a fair but throaty French, but was not exactly talkative in that tongue, whatever he may be in his own and in the intimacies of his harem. In fact, contrary as it may be to our movie and popular-novel conception of royalty, he was rather bashful, with a schoolboy dread of making a mistake in the foreign tongue he was using, and at the same time evidently fearful of doing or saying anything that might displease the French. His demeanor was a curious mixture of regal old-family pride, a pride reaching so far back that we mere moderns from a barbarian world were not worthy of knowing the secrets of life behind it, and of the anxiety of the star in a royal movie being filmed under the eye of the manager of the great Jewish corporation that is 'putting him across.' All of which did not remove the first impression that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah would be a fine fellow to take along for a tramp or a swim, and that it would not be long before one could begin calling him 'Prah Old Top.'

All hands seemed a little ill at ease. Having exchanged the usual platitudes, we stood about doing nothing much, paused with admiring mien before a new bronze bust of the king, covered with medals and decorations, and a good likeness, though of no better color than his actual complexion, but showing neither the betel-red lips nor the cigarette that drips almost incessantly from them. His Majesty handed out atrocious French tobacco-monopoly cigars worthy of a Chinese tuchun, but wisely stuck to cigarettes himself, [310] smoking one after another in rapid succession. We chatted a little on general subjects, the impression growing that the king's French was good enough if only he could

have thrown off the feeling that it would be an intolerable disgrace for a king to make an error in speech."

"At a mere suggestion from my companion, and as if it were a relief from a tense situation, his Majesty graciously stepped to the main doorway of the palace, an excellent jet-black background for a blazing tropical sunshine that outdid anything Hollywood can devise in lighting-effects, and posed for his photograph. Another merest hint from the commissaire and Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah went off at once like a small boy to dress up for his picture, and came back in a surprisingly short time in his most regal robes, a radiant royal costume quite beyond my power to describe. All the medals on the breast of bronze near-by were now in place on the living model; he was again in women's silk stockings, quite evidently brand new, and this time held up by round-the-leg garters of brilliant hue. A green and saffron flowered-silk sampot--but how foolish for a man who cannot even describe a ball-dress well enough to give his wife any conception of it to attempt so impossible a job as this!

Never have I found a king more docile in meeting my [311] every suggestion. Barely a whisper from me and he ordered his throne-room decked out in its coronation best, had his royal attendants summoned. Cringing flunkies brought in swords of state, big golden bowls, a marvelous hat of half cowboy half women-of-the-plume-days style, studded with jewels, and with a Burmese-pagoda top. Ascending his throne, the king assumed his most regal aspect, his white gloves flashing like those of a traffic policeman during a Catholic procession. The master of ceremonies of the palace himself

brought tables and other regal paraphernalia to offset my lack of a tripod; two men in green, each holding a great sword, knelt fearfully at the foot of the throne, and--and I muffed the picture. No doubt the nervous tension of photographing kings on their thrones in their coronation-robes would be enough to cause an even calmer and more experienced photographer to misjudge tropical light conditions; at any rate I so under-exposed that strip of film that only those with keen eyesight can make out more than the general lay-out of the throne, and the king's white-gloved hands on his richly sampotted knees.

Lesser catastrophes have left broken hearts, but it did not so much matter about that throne-room picture after all, for, again at the merest suggestion of the commissaire and as promptly as a circus seal obeys its trainer, the king once more stepped to the spotlighted doorway of the palace, hat, robes, medals, and all, to give my camera another trial, finally posing with his French boss at his side. The commissaire was also in all his glory. Three great medals that proved he had done this, that, or some other brave deed--for he was not a man to have successfully bootlicked this, that, or the other high authority--blazed over his heart. His white uniform coat and black trousers had fancy neck, waist, wrist, and trouser-seam bands; he wore a sword, [312] with rich belt-tassels, and carried white gloves, though the white casque on his head

and the black shoes on the blistering pavement had nothing unusual about them. In short his dress was as out of keeping with his plebeian name of Mill--were names translated--as it was with the simple backwoods life about us. Finally his Majesty, of his own volition unless my eyes were momentarily off their guard, was graciously moved to insist that I also stand beside him in the doorway spotlight and let the camera again do its worst. In vain did I plead my unworthiness to be thus immortalized, like one of the boon companions of his Majesty, particularly in my vagabondish incongruities of rumpled semi-whites, once-tan shoes still half decided to be black, a necktie that insisted on the right to be temperamental in a tropical climate, a pocket bulging full of--how should I know what? The king, I long afterward noticed, wore quite a different face in these pictures in true royal garb than that of the genial boulevardier he presented in mufti, something like his own elder brother, with all the cares of state upon his shoulders."

23: Franck--316-317 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 231, 643

"The king of Luang Prabang keeps a number of royal elephants; and he is no nonentity as a business man either, by the way. Supplementing his salary, if the word suits a monarch,, of forty-six thousand piastres a year, and thereby offsetting his consumption of silk stockings, he has much private property, including great forests and sawmills, in [317] which many of his elephants work for him. For a time some of the royal elephants were assigned the task of dragging rollers used in the making of roads about the capital, but they are a tender beast, for all their size and reputed longevity, and even with only four or five hours of labor a day, at their two-mile-an-hour gait, with the privilege of resting every third day, two of them died from this unwonted exertion. The king, evidently no figurehead in his capacity as business manager of his personal estates and property, protested, and from four to six water-buffaloes to each roller now take the place of an elephant.

In theory the many wild elephants in the Kingdom of the Divine Buddha also belong to the king. When new recruits are needed in the royal stables, some of the wild beasts are caught by digging pits. Then a tame and a wild one are chained together, leaving the wild elephant to tug furiously at a collar with sharp iron points in it. The most bellicose are fastened to a tree by a lasso about a hind leg until they are worn out with struggle and hunger, when the two largest éléphants de chasse available take

the captive between them and shake and roll him until he decides, like the man who foresees the lawyer fees involved in an action for divorce, that after all he will be happier in the domestic state. Most of those captured do not wait for this third degree, but, suddenly resigned to their new fate, give in to the barbed collar and stroll homeward with their false brother, pulling up tufts of good grass as they go and calmly tapping each mouthful on a front foot to shake the earth off the roots before transferring it to their dainty mouths."

23: Franck--318-319 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 262, 643

"He was received like any other invited luncheon guest, though he was always addressed as Majesté by the commissaire and his well chosen wife, and the half-dozen French functionaries they had been able to scrape together in the kingdom. In lieu of a box of chocolates his Majesty had sent ahead some Laosian food that is served as dessert at the royal table. One dish was a kind of custard cooked in small cocoanuts, the base of the husk cut down to resemble the shank of a goblet, and preserving the cocoanut taste. Another was a kind of vermicelli covered with nut dust, not unlike a similar dish in China. The ordinary people do not indulge in such delicacies, which are reserved for the royal palace. Even there, according to my hostess, there are few changes of menu. The king was well versed in Western table manners, though he did not take a very active part in the conversation, which of course was in French. He showed up best as a sympathetic listener, and was easily amused. In so far as my own almost unknown country was concerned, he seemed to be particularly interested in the Mormons and in what the French call the régime sec. He laughed for some time in his merry yet kingly way when told that Brigham Young had forty wives and a correspond-[319]ing number of children, apparently without seeing any connection between this and his own fifteen and forty respectively. Or it may be that he was laughing at the plight of Brigham from the vantage-point of his own experience. The régime sec, in other words,

prohibition, he plainly did not understand at all, any more than does the average Frenchman, and there was nothing to be gained in trying to make clear the American point of view on the subject. He would of course have been horrified to learn that there are persons in that benighted wineless land from which I came who have never heard of his ancient kingdom; nor did I feel it quite safe to pad out the conversation by bringing up the question of silk stockings in its relation to our national economic problem, for one can never be sure just how sensitive kings may be on these very personal matters."

23: Franck--319-320 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 643

"It became more and more evident however, that Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah was not born anybody's fool, even if circumstances and the foolishness of his father Zacharine had left him and his kingdom in an embarrassing position. There was something behind his Oriental-Gallic courtesy and his almost perpetual smile. Nor did he seem to take himself or his regality or his white elephants or any of the rest of his royal trappings too seriously. On this subject of white elephants, by the way, he mentioned that one was now supposed to be on its way to him, some Laotian merchants among his loyal subjects having captured or purchased such an animal that had been seen in a distant part of his kingdom. He thought Bangkok used to have one but that his Siamese peer was now forced to do without this adornment to their respective kinghoods. They were not white anyway, he went on, but rather a pinkish light-gray, like the albino water-buffalo; and his manner implied that whatever his royal cousin of Siam might think about it, a [320] white elephant to him would be merely an interesting addition to his menagerie. 'May you live as long as an elephant!' is a common form of greeting in some parts of the East; but quite aside from the doubtful kindness involved, it is based on one of those many mistaken beliefs of mankind, according to the king, corroborated by all the French present, who asserted that no elephant ever lives longer than have many men and women."

"Were they not restrained by fear of the Siamese, and their horror of the jungles so prolific of death, this principality [HD: i.e. Luang Prabang] would soon fall into the hands of the Annamites, who now dare not advance nearer than seven days' journey off. A beautiful stream, 100 metres wide, unites [138] with the great river to the north-east of the town, and leads to some Laotian and savage villages bearing the name of Fie. These are no other than the tribes called Penoms by the Cambodians, Khu by the Siamese, and Moï by the Annamites,--all words simply signifying 'savages.'

The whole chain of mountains which extends from the north of Tonquin to the south of Cochin China, about 100 miles north of Saigon, is inhabited by this primitive people, divided into tribes speaking different dialects, but whose manners and customs are the same. All the villages in the immediate neighbourhood are tributary; those nearest to the town supply workmen for buildings erected for the king and princes, and these are heavily taxed. Others pay their tribute in rice.

Their habitations are in the thickest parts of the forests, where they only can find a path. Their cultivated grounds are to be seen on the tops and sides of the mountains; in fact, they employ the same means as wild animals to escape from their enemies, and to preserve that liberty and independence which are to them, as to all God's creatures, their supreme good.

68: Mouhot--137-138 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-2
116, 101, 361, 643, 651

Yesterday, and the day previous, I was presented to the princes who govern this little state, and who bear the title of kings. I know not why, but they displayed for my benefit all they could devise of pomp and splendour."

68: Mouhot--265-266 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 609, 643, 648

"[HD: Excerpt from one of Mouhot's letters to his wife] During my journey through the forests I enjoyed in anticipation the pleasure I should enjoy on reaching Louang Prabang, the capital of the province of Laos, in writing you good long letters containing all details of my journey; but [266] I reckoned without my host, and it will be several weeks before I can enjoy any repose, or carry my wishes into execution.

In the villages through which I passed no great degree of curiosity was manifested; but here, where the population is greater, I am surrounded by a compact and curious crowd, which extends even to the walls of a pagoda adjoining the caravanserai where I am lodged by the favour of his Majesty the King. Besides, I, in my turn, see people of various nations and tribes who excite my curiosity. Judge, therefore, if it be easy to collect my ideas. However, I profit by the occasion of the king's departure for Bangkok in a few days to pay his tribute, [HD: to the King of Siam] and who has offered to take charge of any letters for me, to give some signs of life to you."

115: Le Boulanger

AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

643

[For kings, royal ceremonies, royal activities and royal succession in Laos throughout its history, see category 116, throughout.]

648* held the actual power of a native chieftain over the Thai
175* cantons (Cf. Mission Pavie, Vol. VII, p. 211). This situation, which threatened to destroy the negotiations which had been begun, was solved in 1891 by the Quan-Phong's reconciliation with Deo-van-Tri.

Restoration of the Thai cantons by Siam (December 1888). On December 13 he reached Theng where the Phya Surrissak was awaiting him in order to return, in behalf of his government, the Thai cantons which were henceforth acknowledged to be French. Whatever bitterness he may have felt, the Siamese leader presented himself with a good grace "together with his retinue in the great room of the citadel where the native chiefs were assembled." In simple terms he invited them to serve the French faithfully and expressed the wish that they might "enjoy repose after their misfortune" and "become prosperous as they deserved." Then he liberated the last of Lai's captives and left "on inspection" for the Houa-Phans. Regarding his "military" task as terminated, Pavie separated from Commander Pennequin after /285/ /Page 285 is devoted to an illustration: "A street in Luang-Prabang."--Translator/ /286/ turning over to him the administration of the virtually pacified territories, and left on December 26 for Luang-Prabang. He reached there on January 2, 1889 and returned to their families quite a few young women and children who had been carried off when the city was captured and whom he had been able to redeem. He found the capital happy once again under its luminous
/643/ winter sky. More than twelve hundred new houses had been built in the last eight months, and ten thousand Laotians had returned to rally round their old king, who had been solemnly reinstalled on his ancestors' throne the previous May 2. All these folk knew of Pavie's success in the north and understood that it would guarantee their tranquillity, and so they welcomed the new members of the mission with extreme favor and, with no constraint nor care for what the Siamese authorities might think, they feted its leader who once more became the guest, for six weeks, of the Satou of the Wat-Mai.

Pavie recovered fairly quickly from the attacks of paludism from which he had not been exempt in the course of his last expedition, and organized the forthcoming journey of Cupet, who was back from Tran-Ninh, to Muong-Son and the valley of the Song-Ca, as well as Garanger's journey to Xieng-Sen, Xieng-Toung and Mandalay. He also placed Massie under Nicolon in the /287/ administration of the consulate, whose large house was nearing completion on the right

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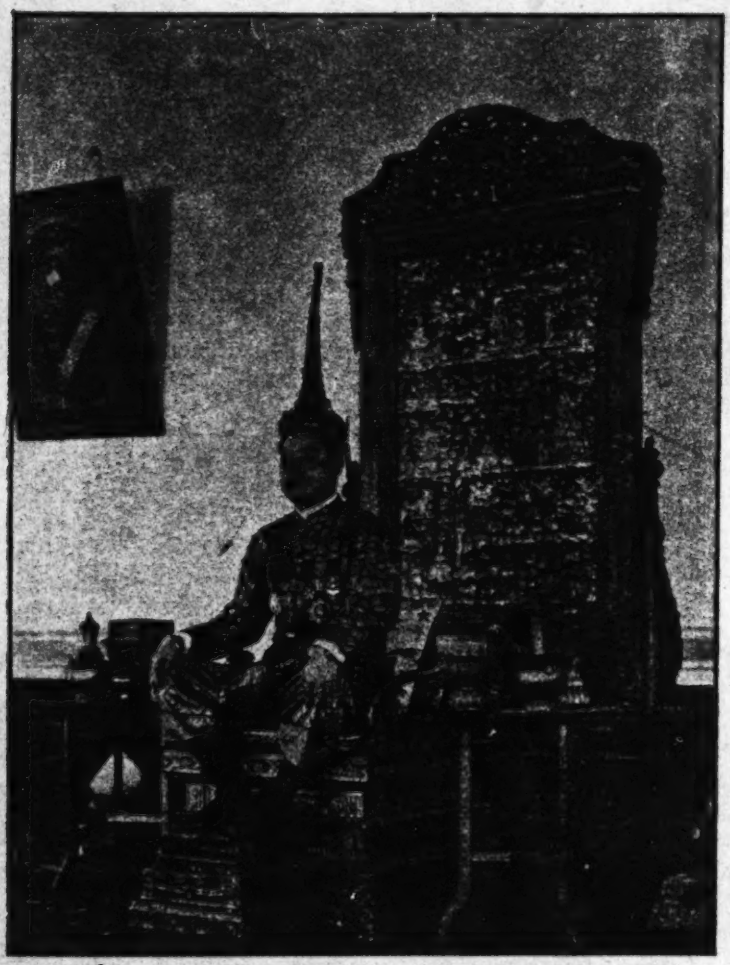

Fig. 20. H. M. Sisavang-Vong, king of Luang-Prabang

/Facing p. 352/

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Fig. 4 [p. 8] An audience of the former king of Luang-Prabang (May 1890).

554
643

Fig. 5 /p. 9/ Imperial seal of Annam belonging to the king of Luang-Prabang.

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Fig. 6 /p. 12/ The king of Bassac, who died in 1900.

764 some forty meters long folded across its width until it was the size of a man's hand (with thumb and little finger spread). The strip was unrolled ahead of the coffin and was held by the youngest of the dead person's sons, who led the mourning. Then the bonzes, relatives, officials and best friends of the deceased took positions on each side and held on to the strip with one hand, as we would hold on to pall-bearers' cords. Thus constituted, the procession set off ahead of the coffin, drawing it along in a manner of speaking.

Tom-toms, gongs, cymbals, clarinets and the Laotian organ were heard during the processional, as well as songs and improvisations. When it reached the funeral pyre the procession circled it three times and deposited the coffin on it.

The spectators then took up positions under sheltering bushes, in shady spots or even in full sunlight, depending on their rank. All was in readiness to light the fire, which was to be provided by the Governor of the province, a delegate of the king of Luang-Prabang who is the "master of life" (1), for the deceased was a high official.

[643]

(1) The king of Luang-Prabang bears the title Tiao-Tsi-Vit, master of life.

[208] One important rite still remained to be performed: the last ablutions of water and brandy on the face, chest and hands of the body.

Then men climbed up on the pyre and removed the canopy of the catafalque, leaving the bamboo frame showing through the torn wrapping. They broke the lid of the coffin into splinters with great ax blows and thus exposed the body of the deceased, which exuded such a strong odor that all the spectators on the leeward side fell back.

The final toilet took place at this time. The men who do this work absorb such quantities of brandy to drive off miasmas and stimulate their own courage that their gestures and merriment, at such a time and place, would seem to us to be out of place. But here things 764 are not seen in the same light, and the gesticulations of all these folk 526 armed with axes and various containers and their grotesque attitudes around the open coffin merely stimulate the spectators' joy. The 527 songs and music had not ceased, and wrestling matches and animal combats were about to take place. The wrestlers took the measure of one another and came to grips with their hands flat open, while the

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

644 Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king, great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the 647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 631 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 646 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as cantonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to
646 vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[192] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack

Whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Balnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Psi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
619 penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and
643 Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on
579 the map as Pa-Tao-la and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

563 The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
668 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M. Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have
726 constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum, who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognao and Gosiar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

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traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion. The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

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They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-Ia, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

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APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

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The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race. Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

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He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More industrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements himself (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

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The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders composed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

149: Reinach--422 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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APPENDIX XXI

NOTES ON GOLD-BEARING DEPOSITS

1. DEPOSITS OF NAM-BENG AND NAM-NGAO

(District of Pak-Ta--Luang-Prabang)

316 These deposits, which are situated in the principality of Luang-Prabang a hundred kilometers west of the capital, are made up of alluvial beds in the valleys formed by the left-bank tributaries of the Mekong (Nam-Beng, Nam-Ngao, Nam-Ta, etc.).

[643 556] Before our settlement in Laos, these deposits had long constituted part of the patrimony of the kings of Luang-Prabang. It was from here that they extracted all the gold needed not only to pay their tributes of vassaldom to the Chinese, Annamite and Siamese sovereigns, but also to make purchases in Bangkok and cast gold articles and massive pieces of jewelry for their family, as well as the insignia of officials.

Our own prospecting trips to these deposits in 1893 and 1894 yielded, merely by washing in a wash-trough and without amalgamation, "crude gold" which was clearly visible in the form of nuggets, grains and dust. Moreover, from natives who worked these deposits we acquired nuggets which were obtained by means of this same rudimentary process and which varied in weight from two to forty-five grams. We even saw nuggets of unrolled "or crespelé" weighing [301] 140 and 225 grams, which came from the same place. What is more, it is not unusual to meet children wearing nuggets hung around their neck like amulets--nuggets which vary in volume from the size of a hazelnut to that of a pressed fig.

The gentle slope and short length of the valleys where the deposits are found, and the proximity of the mountains from which the gold comes, are precious indications of the presence of outcropping lodes. Moreover, the appearance of the crespelé metal, as if it were spongy, [125] to which particles of quartz still adhere, is a confirmation of this hypothesis.

In 1895 a corporation called the "Mining and agricultural company of Laos" ["Société minière et agricole du Laos"], with a capital of 150,000 francs, was established in Paris through our efforts. It sent M. Isnard, a mining engineer, to the locality to study the deposits of gold and precious stones which we had prospected.

A corporation with a capital of several millions was later to take the place of the study group.

He[1] must never look at a woman. However a few old women are seen in the pagoda. These are the devotees. They are dressed in white, their heads are completely shaved, and they lead a life of observance and asceticism which is as rigorous as that of the monks. They render small services to the bonzes, decorate the altar, etc., but they live outside the enclosure of the pagoda. 792 785 562

Laotian Buddhism.

In a recent pamphlet, His Excellency Thao Nhouy Abhay, former Minister of National Culture and Education, wrote: "In its intrinsic substance Buddhism is deeply tolerant, but ours [26] has truly become not austere enough." Therefore he proposes some necessary reforms which would quickly raise the intellectual and moral level of the bonzes in Laos. There are two sects in Laos: the Mahanikay and the Thammayut. The only difference between the two is the way in which they consider that monastic rule should be observed. Nothing distinguishes them in appearance except the color of the monastic robe of the Mahanikay, which is brownish-ochre almost chestnut. The king is the chief of the Buddhist clergy. As for the believer who regularly observes his religious duties, he is satisfied with little and gives much in alms. Buddhist tales and particularly Laotian texts, among them the Pannasajataka (Ha Sip Xat), quote all the merits acquired for future lives by those who give alms and, above all, feed the bonzes. 779 795 [792] 643 [735]

Religious Literature.

The basis of the religious literature of Laos is the Buddhist Tripitaka. These "Three Baskets" contain the integral "word of the Buddha." 779 538

The basket [corbeille] of Vinaya (Vinayapitaka) is the rule of monastic life. It consists of five sections: Patimokkha, Mahavagga, Coullavagga, Souttavibhanga and Parivara. The Patimokkha is meant to be read in public (particularly on the feasts of the eighth month), on the periodic days of confession. The Mahavagga and the Coullavagga give the list of daily obligations, illustrated by examples drawn from the life of the Buddha. The Souttavibhanga is really a commentary on the Patimokkha; finally the Parivara is both a revision and a catechism.

The Basket of the Soutta (Souttapitaka) contains an enormous amount of preaching and of edifying tales. Among others, the famous Dhammapada, a treasury of the sayings of the Buddha and the Jatakas are to be found in this basket.

[27] The third basket is that of Abhidharma and consists of seven

1 [i.e., a bonze --Analyst]

796 a hermit and said to them: "If you think of your mother, build little
773 illuminated boats and let them be carried away by the current on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month."

This rite is common to all the Asiatic countries of the monsoon. It is found in Lower Burma where it is said to celebrate the victory of the monk Oupagoutta over Mara. It is also practised in Cambodia, southern China at Amoy, in Borneo and in Japan.

Actually we are dealing with what Sir J. Frazer called the expulsion of the emissary he-goat. "These little rafts loaded with offerings attracted the evil genii who had been in contact with the living during the rains. They are driven away on board these frail skiffs." The expulsion of the emissary goat is often accompanied by licentious scenes similar to those of ancient Saturnalia and Bacchanalia.

[526] The race of the dugouts was originally intended to bring about the fall of the waters, but apparently it seems that in Vientiane, in spite of offerings made to the Nagas of the Nam Passak, the original idea has been lost, and the dugout race has become simply a sporting event.

796 The Feasts of the Twelfth Month.

643 When King Asoka had completed the 84,000 shrines which he had built to contain the ashes of the Buddha, he made a great feast of the That on the fifteenth day of the crescent moon of the twelfth month. The feasts of the That Luang are celebrated in memory of this pious deed.

At Vientiane they are preceded by the feast of Vat Si Muong and conclude with those of the Vat Ong Tu [46] and Impeng (see appendix: Vientiane). They always involve the same ceremonial, circumambulation around the pagoda with small sticks of wax and incense, offerings to the bonzes, etc....

The day before the feast of That Luang, on the fourteenth day of the crescent moon, the Great Oath takes place. The king goes to the pagoda of Vat Ong Tu. All the high dignitaries and principal office-holders of the kingdom are present. The bonzes chant the ritual prayers. Two Kha guards in red tunics and green sampots, red berets with a pompon on their heads similar to the headdress worn by warriors represented at the Bayon of Angkor Thom, plunge the points of the sabres, guns and lances into four begging bowls containing lustral water. The master of ceremonies recites the oath written on palm leaves three times. Then the water in which the weapons have been dipped is distributed to the principal dignitaries who drink it.

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Then the royal retinue proceeds to the That Luang where the king must spend the night in a sala. He is accompanied by his ministers and in principle may not leave until they come and fetch him.

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On the morning of the fifteenth day, the king, carried by his guards, goes to make his offerings to the bonzes, and the whole day is devoted to public rejoicing, of which one form deserves to be mentioned. It is the game of the Thi khi.

Its origin, so far as we know at present, remains obscure. The Pra Lak Pra Lam tells us that Indra and Rama played Thi Khi together, and that since that day it has been played at Vientiane.

Let us observe that the game was unknown at Luang Prabang. It was imported from the south. Tradition required that it be played on horseback, when it was played like polo.

At the present time it is played on foot with a stick with the end bent over like a crosier and a ball the size [47] of a child's head and is similar to hockey. There are two opposing sides, the office-holders and the people. The latter should in principle win two victories out of three games. The game has no rules, there is no umpire and no limit to the ground played on. Sometimes the ball goes off into the shrubbery, and all the players go and look for it. Only a hypothetical line indicates the limit of the enemy side. [641]

The feasts of Vat Inpeng and of Vat Ong Tu merely repeat those of Vat Simuong and That Luang.

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THE SECULAR CEREMONIES

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The Sou Khouan can be considered as the transition between the purely religious ceremonies and the secular feasts.

Actually Sou Khouan means "call and reception of the soul." The Laotian has a profound belief in the transmigration of the soul. According to him, the human body is inhabited by thirty-two khouan (spirits) each of whom presides over the function of a member, an organ or an intellectual faculty.

When a human being dies, all of the thirty-two souls leave his body. According to the merits which have been acquired, they go either to the heaven of the gods, or to the province of the dead. Certain beings who have died in an abnormal manner, by suicide, drowning, etc., become wandering souls. They are to be feared, because they return to earth in order to torment the living, and one must make numerous sacrifices to them.

527 805 the course of the year for good or for bad. On the day of the New Year, a bassi is offered to His Majesty the King by the ministers and high dignitaries. Then a delegation of bonzes is admitted to the palace where, after receiving the ritual offerings, they are sprinkled in a cabin by His Majesty the King and members of the royal family.

Outside in the town the aspersions continue more than ever during [643] the whole week. During these feasts the King goes in a dugout to the grottoes of Xieng Men, opposite Luang Prabang, and to those of Pak Ou where he sprinkles the statues there. Then he comes to make the ritual aspersion of the Phra Bang, palladium of the kingdom, at the pagoda of Vat May.

527 773 During these feasts of the New Year, the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu takes place. These are legendary individuals considered the ancestors of the Laotians, whose story is as follows:

When Phou Lan Xong had pierced the gourd, the king of heaven sent his son Khoum Bolom to organize the country. While he was performing the mission entrusted to him by his father, a vine was seen to rise from the earth. It grew rapidly and soon covered the whole world with its shadow. Men ceased to see the sky and were deprived of light and heat. The king ordered this monstrous vine to be cut down, but nobody dared to risk doing this. Finally an aged couple [deux vieux époux] Phou Thao Gneu and Me Ngam, armed with a hatchet and preceding the son of heaven, come down to earth, announced that they were willing to undertake this perilous task. But they stipulated that after their death they would receive offerings and would be invoked at the beginning of meals and other business. Everybody [67] agreed to this. Then they attacked the vine with blows of the hatchet. At the end of three months and three days, the vine fell and crushed them in its fall, but the sun shone again on the world.

The agreement has been kept. Since that day the dance of the Phou Gneu Gna Gneu is one of the principal elements of the Laotian feast of the New Year.

527 825 The two dancers wear enormous cardboard masks. They listen on their knees to prayers read aloud to them, while alongside of them a lion waves its paws nonchalantly. This lion has rather a peculiar role. Apparently it is another survival of the legend of the cycle of animals. Not having any toys to give their children, the first ancestors had the idea of modeling one year a rat, another year an ox, then a tiger, a hare, a dragon, etc. The name of each animal designated the year during which it was used as a toy. Finally these little figures became alive and became the ancestors of the present day species. At